

# BMHA Newsletter

BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA



Volume 3, Number 2

Apr/May/June 1992

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Dayton HamVention — April 24-26

Here's the schedule for BMHA's third annual Forum.

DATE: Sunday, April 26

TIME: 0930 - 1100

ROOM: 2

Four panelists will each introduce a bicycle-mobile topic for discussion by presenting a short demonstration, after which members of the audience will contribute related ideas. Hartley Alley, NAOA, will do a 15 minute presentation comprised mainly of pictures, some of which he shot during his career as a freelance magazine photographer.

### FORUM PANELISTS:

Ned Mountain, WC4X - "Lightweight Rigs for HF"

(see his article this issue)

Russ Dwarshuis, KB8U - "CW While Pedaling"

(see article this issue)

Bob Pulhuj, KE8ZI - "Homebrewing and Antenna Projects"

Hartley Alley, NAOA - "The Wonderful World of Cycling"

Mike Nickolaus, NF0N - "The BMHA 20 Meter Net"

**EYEBALL** We'll get together for a chat and refreshments in Hartley Alley's room at the Holiday Inn North, I-74 and Wagoner Ford Road. Friday, April 24, 5:30 to 7. Call the motel desk 513-278 4871 to get Hartley's room number. All are invited, whether BMHA members or not. Wear your name tag. Maybe later we'll go down to dinner in the motel.

**2 METER CONTACT** We'll use 146.575 simplex as BMHA's own secret frequency for communicating at the Ham Arena and at Hartley's hotel. Local repeaters are too busy. Put that frequency in your HT's memories and monitor it.

**MESSAGE CENTER** To contact other BMHA members at Ham Arena, leave WRITTEN messages at booth 305 at the Arena. This is the S-COM booth, and the owner, Bob Schmidt WA9FBO, has offered to do this for us. Be there daily at 11:30 to join a BMHA informal lunch bunch.

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

### Firmly Packed

This issue will have to make do with hardly any art work or decoration, because there is so much to tell you. You'll find on this issue page the info on our BMHA Forum at Dayton. This is our big annual event. Hope to see you there. Come up and make yourself known to the panel members.

**Growth:** Take a glance at our New Members list. They range from NJ to MD to TX to CA to WA to ONT, and then a big leap to Sweden. (I'm still trying to find out what ELLEMTL U A does.) Incidentally, we have a new candidate for "youngest member" — 10 year old James Boudro, N9NTE. Must get him to write us a short piece.

Last quarter of '91 we added eight new members and thought that was terrific. This first quarter of '92 we've added 25! And this sudden spurt will probably continue, if only due to the spread that just came out in the latest *Worldradio*, April issue, page 27. Here it is still March, and we've already received 11 responses to the article and three of these have already become members.

**Packet:** At last, we've put together the long-promised Packet Directory. It turned out to be easy once I figured out how to merge from one data base to another. If you find mistakes and/or needed changes, please let me know promptly.

**New Antenna Articles:** The most popular department of this newsletter is the one that features your designs and ideas for antenna projects. We need more. Send in completed pieces, or just rough ideas. See you in Dayton!

—Hartley Alley, NAOA, Editor

## RAGBRAI / BMHA Rally & Picnic

On Wednesday July 22nd, BMHA members are invited to a picnic supper in Des Moines, Iowa. We'll be guests at a joint effort of the Des Moines Amateur RC and RAGBRAI's corp of ham radio communicators. (As you perhaps know, RAGBRAI is the gigantic bike ride across Iowa that annually draws 10,000 cyclists.) The picnic will take place in downtown park near the state capitol. There should be plenty of parking space, in case you drive.

Food will be provided by the Des Moines ARC. You'll get a chance to see the various bicycle-mobile rigs that the RAGBRAI operators are using on this week-long trek. And you are invited to join the ride for a day and cycle along to see what happens on this world-renowned mass movement.

Talk-in will be on 146.94. For further details contact Chris Charon, WB0RSW, Director of Communications for RAGBRAI, M-F: 1-800-247 5346, ext. 8555.

# A DREAM SETUP FOR HF

## An HF HT that's QRP and FB

HF bicycle mobile has been a secret dream since I was first licensed at the prime bike riding age of 10. Inspired by listening to and working Elroy Shelley, WB9GIE [see previous issue] on the 20M BMHA net, I knew this was the year! On November 2, WC4X bicycle mobile hit the airwaves on 40 meters SSB while on our club's annual cycling weekend in North Florida. I was using my new rig, an HF HT that's QRP and FB, which of course in ham radio talk means "a high frequency handheld transceiver that runs on low power and works fine". Details later. About 20 stations were contacted in 5 states, plus the Bahamas! By hanging around with the Southeast net on 7251kHz, it was easy to get signal reports and chat with friends all over the Southeast. My signal reports ranged from 5-1 to 5-6, and I had absolutely no trouble receiving anybody.

### 40 Meter HT

The radio was a Mizuho MX 7S. A what? Yes, that's right, a 40 Meter HT! This little gem puts out 2 honest watts on CW or SSB, is very stable, and has a hot receiver. The radio mounts neatly in my Cannondale handlebar bag. Although it can contain six AA cells for power, these are short lived due to the high current (650 ma) on transmit. So I used an arrangement of six D cells of the Gates lead-acid rechargeable type. These cells, available at many hamfests, are physically the same size as other D cells but are rated at 2 volts and 2.5AH. Six of them provide 12 volts and reasonable power for all of my toys. A dangling speaker/mic. is annoying and dangerous. A better way had to be found. It was.

### The Bike Mike

Introducing the WC4X clip-on "Bike Mike"! (See the photo.) The ingredients are an alligator clip, 12/2 house wire, heat shrink tubing, and a small electric mic cartridge (Radio Shack #270-090). The mike mounts to the handlebar bag support bracket and is close enough to your mouth to require virtually no effort to use it. Yet it is not in the way, and if constructed properly should not be a safety hazard. A PTT pushbutton is mounted under the velcro mount of my brake-mounted rear view mirror. Now it is possible to QSO while riding without fiddling with anything once the radio is initially set up. It should keep my collarbone a little safer in the future!

### Antenna Setup

The antenna used for my HF operation is the standard Hustler whip with a MO-4 short (22") mast. The antenna mounts to a car mirror mount (Radio Shack) which is bolted to my rear carrier. It is mechanically very satisfactory, even with a 75 meter resonator on it! It took a lot of nerve to finally hit the road with the HF setup, but I'll do it more now that the initial shock is over. It is very important to watch the antenna when your body is on the bike in riding position, as there appears to be a significant difference with your whole body radiating at such low frequencies. As you can imagine, this takes a good bit of trial and error, but it's worth it.

### More on the HT

In case you want more information on the Mizuho radios, here goes. It is physically the same as the 10 meter DX HANDY that was marketed a few years back by AEA. The

company that makes them is Mizuho in Japan, and they make them for 80, 40, 20, 17, 15, 10, 6, and 2 meters! They are only sold in Japan. If you can find a willing accomplice in Japan to buy one in a ham store, expect to pay about 275 to 300 bucks each including shipping and duties. I have tried to convince Mizuho that they are missing a significant market here, but no luck to date. I have the 80, 40 and 17 meter versions. They all work perfectly, and are NOT for sale!

P.S. Anybody interested in cycling to Dayton from somewhere within a day's ride? Perhaps a BMHA "bike-in" might be in order!

73's, and keep pedaling!

—Ned Mountain, WC4X  
185 Carriage Sta Cir  
Roswell, GA 30075

## Flash! Now You Can Buy a Mizuho HT

As mentioned in my BMHA NewsLetter article (see above) I am the proud owner of a set of the Mizuho HF HT's (QRP "DX Handy" type) radios from Japan. They are just the ticket for HF bicycle mobiling and other creative QRP endeavors. There is no USA representation of the company that makes these radios. After considerable effort, I have been put in contact with the export agent, who is willing to sell radios to me as long as the minimum quantity is 10 units. If I can get orders for at least 10 units I will take care of all the arrangements. This is not a business venture, and I am actively trying to get some US amateur radio company interested in the product line. I'm willing to make a ONE TIME order for the Mizuho radios.

(continued on next page)



With a Mizuho HT nestled in his handlebar bag and his Bike Mike at the ready, Ned Mountain WC4X is ready to roll.

**Bands available:** 40M, 20M (limited qum.) 15M, and 6M.  
**Approximate price:** \$325 for radio and telescoping antenna.  
**Delivery time:** Approx. 3 months after I place the order.  
**Deadline to order:** One month after Dayton Forum - May 27.

#### To order:

1. Specify band of radio(s) desired.
2. Send me a deposit check for \$250 PER RADIO. Deposit checks will be held until I place the order. Should the order not materialize, your check will of course be returned.
3. Send a SASE so I can let you know that your check has been cashed, the order placed, and the expected ship date. I will also let you know the remaining balance that must be sent prior to the due date.
4. Send check for remaining balance by due date.
5. I will ship the radio(s) to you via UPS as soon as they are received.

I'll be on the program at the BMHA Forum at Dayton [see *HamVention schedule elsewhere*] demonstrating these radios and discussing HF operation on the bike. I'll be happy to take orders at that time.

I cannot guarantee the product, and am doing this simply to promote HF QRP — especially bicycle mobiling. You may need to purchase additional crystals for the radios depending on how they are equipped.

73's

—Ned Mountain, WC4X

185 Carriage Station Circle

Roswell, GA 30075

(404) 992 8576 (evenings/weekends)

## BMHA NET....ON 20

### *The Net Keeps a Pedalin'*

"One of the warmest winters on record." That's what the weatherman says about it. In spite of my being located here on the usually frigid northern plains I already have over 200 miles on the bike this year.

That's just a taste of what's to come this year, I'm sure. Those of you who have been checking in to the BMHA net have been hearing some of the same tales of riders from the northern states getting in more miles than ever.

The BMHA net has been having a great turnout the last few months. Maybe the net has been really discovered. Many of you are regulars, and that is really appreciated. We have had bicycle mobiles and DX stations check in, along with many new calls.

Many of you are planning to take some great rides this year. We would like to hear about them on the net. Stop by and let all of us know. You might even have an extra rider or two go with you.

We still meet on the first and third Sunday of each month at 2330 UTC, on or near 14.253.

See you at the BMHA Forum at Dayton. And keep on pedalin'.

—Mike Nickolaus, NF0N, Net Control

316 E. 32nd St.

S. Sioux City, NE 68776

## NEW MEMBERS

*We're pleased to add these names to our Membership List:*

Brian Adam, AA0DQ, POB 3140, Sioux City, IA 51102  
Bill Blankenship, KB0H1, 2900 Jackson, Sioux City, IA 51104  
James Bauder, N9NTE, 644 S Cornell, Villa Park, IL 60181  
Stephen Boudin, M9NTW, 644 S Cornell, Villa Park, IL 60181  
Allen Butler, KADBS, 1522 A Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402  
Ed Celsens, WFJZ, 2830 Fishpond Rd, Elkton City, MD 21042  
Bill Clappert, NU00, 50 Meadow Lane, Cumming, IA 50061  
Grear Craig, AA5HN, 312 Northwind Dr, El Paso, TX 79912  
Ed Efehek, WX2R, 9-01 Arnot Place, Fair Lawn, NJ 07410  
ELLENTEL D A, (Marie Ericsson, Librarian)  
Armstrongsgate 14, Stockholm - Alvsjö, Sweden  
John Kaller, N0NXT, 2150 Broadway St, Iowa City, IA 52240  
Ron Kirsten, WB0MBZ, 1374 Sunsetcrest Rd, Indianapolis, IA 50125  
David Mackie, 3044 Caminito Niguel, San Diego, CA 92117  
James McDonald, N7U3, 9235 N 32nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85027  
Tom Milton, WBAPNE, 41 Hilltop Rd, Asheville, NC 28803  
Jon Nelderback, KA0RQN, 719 33rd St, Des Moines, IA 50312  
David New, WB4SBE, 3939 Lakewood Dr, Ann Arbor, MI 48101  
Ken Noffsinger, A5H1, 41 Kent Rd, Tipp City, OH 45371  
Rob Orrell, VE3HBN, 47 Dunsmuir, Etobicoke, ON, Canada M9R 3W7  
Richard Parsley, ND3G, Rt 1 Box 514, Greensboro, MD 21639  
Jack Reed, WA7LAW, 4216 W Redfield Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85021  
Dick Shusterman, N9EX, 268 Jules Rd, Inverness, IL 60067  
Robert Trauth, KB7LH2, 4118 1/2 Aldrich, Bellingham, WA 98226  
Phil Winter, KM4OD, 5850 Wilks Lake Rd, Cumming, GA 30130  
Mark Walsh, KC6BKZ, 4529 Taylor Av, Santa Rosa, CA 95407

*With traditional ham friendliness, make contact with these new members, welcome them to BMHA, and help them with any problems they might have.*

## ABOUT BMHA

### *For the information of our first-time readers.*

Bicycle Mobile Hams of America got its start when a "Sissy" in the June '89 QST asked to "get in touch with hams who operate their radios while bicycle-mobile, or while in any other human-powered conveyance", signed by Hartley Alley, NA0A. 25 hams responded, filled out questionnaires, and received a summary of the collected data.

In April of '90 we had our first BMHA Forum at the Dayton HamVention. We played to a packed house, overflowed the room, and added 54 names to our mailing list. Our '91 Forum was again well-attended, and now BMHA is established as a "regular" at this big event.

This is the seventh issue of our quarterly newsletter, which has become the clearing house for the exchange of info and ideas for the hams who go on the air from their bicycles. Since the last issue of this newsletter we have added 24 new members. The total paid membership now stands at 152, with members in 31 states, Canada, Sweden and Germany.

BMHA membership includes: bi-weekly net on 20 meters, annual meeting and Forum at the Dayton HamVention, directory of members, and the BMHA NewsLetter, which has articles on bike trips, antennas, other gear, operating tips, etc. The membership application blank is on the next to last page.

## LETTERS

### Canada to Mexico — a Solo Trek

Dear Hartley,

Please sign me up for BMHA! At last, a club which combines my two favorite hobbies. Here's a few lines about the west coast tour I did last summer.

Started out just north of the Canadian Border on a wonderful, sunny July 6. Took it easy the first few days; didn't see too many bikes. Later found out that almost everyone else went out on the Olympic Peninsula. The Oregon coast is as beautiful as it was when I last rode it, in 1989. The best way to see it is by bike, of course. Had eyeball QSOs with KG6GI and N7LCY, who both noticed the ham license plate on my front rack (more often it elicited a puzzled stare).

Northern California is dry, dry, dry after 5 years of drought. But if you are on a bike and know where to look, the countryside comes alive for you. I saw plenty of deer, raccoons, birds etc., even an occasional snake at the campsites.

I was doing about 50-60 miles a day north of San Francisco, except for one day, between Fort Bragg and Bodega Bay, CA — 103 miles! Of course all the tough hills were right near the end. Visited some friends in the Bay Area, including Bill, N6GDN, and Steve, N6QJN. If there's one spot on earth that is made for biking, it's the S.F. Bay area. South of San Francisco I was feeling right in tune, so I did a few more miles every day, averaging 70-80, regardless of the weather or terrain.

Took a day off in Santa Monica, visited a few museums and rode the beach bike path with my old friend Keith, N6IOY. If you ever bike through Los Angeles, make sure you don't do it on a Saturday — too many bikini-clad women to distract you, and cars ready to run you down. Finally reached the Mexican border on August 13. The bike — a highly modified Cannondale ST 600 — performed flawlessly for the entire five weeks. As usual there were plenty of fun people biking the coast, but alas, no hams.



For ham gear I carried my trusty old Yaesu FT-727R dual-bander, on which I had a few chats while pedaling. The HT fits perfectly into my handlebar bottle cage. The state parks in the three West Coast states have a system of nicely appointed hiker-biker campsites which cost \$2-4 per night. Remember to carry lots of quarters in Washington, or else you don't get a hot shower!

So what's my plan for '92? Starting June 1st I'm riding from here to Bradenton, FL via Bar Harbor, ME. That trip will take 5-6 mos. Anybody who would like to ride with me for all or part of the way is most welcome to come along. I'll be riding the Bicentennial Northern Tier and Eastern Seaboard routes, with a few diversions through Wisconsin and Michigan. Also if anyone knows where I can lay my hands on a compact, light HF CW/SSB QRP transceiver, please let me know.

See you on the road next year!

—Tim Palange, KD4WZ  
22985 Jefferson Pt Rd NE  
Kingston, WA 98346



### From a Young Correspondent

Dear Hartley,

I have been operating while bicycle mobile for about a year now on 2 meters, and really enjoy it. I'm 17 years old, and bicycling is my main means of transportation. Many people my age have abandoned bicycling as a legitimate means of transportation since they now have a car and can get everywhere so much faster. However, since I don't have a car but still enjoy the independence of having my own transportation, I bike just about everywhere I go. People think I'm crazy to commute 3.4 miles uphill to school every day, but I just tell them that the fast 3.4 miles downhill makes it worth while!

Last year I used my IC-2AT on the bicycle to help with communications for a USCF bike race. I've written an article about that event. It's called "Chaos at the Tour de Lowell". Maybe you'd like to run it as a Public Service story. Sincerely,

—Justin M. Hughes, KA1ULT  
252 Slow Road  
Harvard, MA 01451

(Watch for the "Chaos" story next issue. Ed.)



# A BIKER'S WORLD OF HF

## Working CW While Underway

One problem with conventional bicycle mobile operation is that your occasional huffing and puffing is bound to be noticed by the other operator. Say you're in QSO pedaling along just fine, and suddenly you get to a long steep hill. You downshift, stand up on the pedals, key up the transmitter and try to say something. "Uhhh... (whoops) I... (whoops) didn't get... (whoops) that last (huff) part because I was (huff, puff) grinding up this (gasp) hill."

What can you do to avoid this potentially embarrassing situation? You could stop transmitting when exertion is required, but this puts a limit on bicycle MOBILE operation. You could try to keep breathing normally despite the effort, but if you try this for too long you'll at the least pass out. You could try packet radio, but reading a display while riding poses it's own challenges.

**The Case for CW** Or you could try CW! With CW, you could do lung-tearing interval training while preparing for the Olympics, and still keep on transmitting. As long as the lactic acid doesn't seep into your brain, you can carry on an intelligent CW QSO on the bike.

Ok, I admit I'm exaggerating the effects of hills on ordinary bicycle mobile operation. Nonetheless, hills are often a radio problem, and CW offers a nice solution. More important, using CW while bicycle mobile is fun. Most of you have had a good laugh from the response to your telling someone you're bicycle mobile on phone. Imagine the look on someone's face when they copy that you're bicycle mobile using CW! If you try it, I guarantee you'll get some interesting replies from incredulous operators. You can even sense their enthusiasm by their suddenly shaky sending.

**My Gear** I've used a Uniden HR2510 on 10M, a Kantronics KT-115 on 15M, and a Ramsey kit transmitter with a homebrew amplifier on 20M. I use a homebrew keyer. For a paddle I've mounted two subminiature switches on a small plastic box and attached it to the handlebars with nylon straps. I prefer to keep my palms on the handlebars because it keeps my hand near the brake levers, and minimizes hand movement relative to the switches (so bumps on the road don't result in too many extra dits or dahs). Don't try to cheap out and just use one switch as a straight key. Otherwise, your keying will sound like... well, it will sound like someone sending CW with a straight key while they're riding a bicycle. I speak from experience.

**A Comparison** Yet another bonus when using CW is that it has, as you know, a better signal-to-noise ratio than phone, power being equal. This means that you'll be heard more easily by other stations. Recently, I decided to compare CW and SSB. I set my rig down to 5 watts output on both modes. On SSB I made numerous 10M contacts with stations on the west coast with ease. On the CW segment there wasn't a lot of activity for a comparison, but I did manage to pick up a station calling CQ. He was in Denver Colorado and was running 1/2 watt output in a dipole. His signal was reliable at all times, as

## BMHA NEWSLETTER

EDITOR: Hartley Alley, NAOA

### BOARD OF ADVISORS:

Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U Len Koppl, KD0RC  
Mike Nickolaus, NF0N Bob Pulhuj, KE8ZJ  
Chairman and Founder: Hartley Alley, NAOA

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We welcome articles, suggestions, letters, announcements, photos, artwork — anything pertaining to bicycling while operating an amateur radio, or vice versa.

Submitted material will be edited for clarity and, if necessary, shortened to fit space constraints. Material should be submitted before Mar 1, June 1, Sept 1, or Dec 1 for inclusion in the ensuing issue.

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of course was mine. He was so excited about the contact that he requested a photograph of my setup to publish in his local club's newsletter. This exercise demonstrated to me that CW is copiable even when both stations are using micro power.

I'll continue to use mostly SSB for my on-bike contacts, however. As most of you know, it's hard to say much of anything on CW without having a 1/2 hour QSO, and that tends to drain batteries fairly quickly. Using CW is fun once in a while just for the grin factor — and when I don't want to worry about gasping into the mike while I'm laboring up a beastly grade.

—Russell Dwarshuis, KB8U  
427 Barber Ave.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-2721

(Russ will demonstrate his CW gear and technique at the BMHA Forum at the Dayton Hamvention. Ed.)

# TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

## "Beeps, Bikes and the Beautiful Blue Danube"

When two couples who enjoy cycling begin thinking of a vacation together in Europe, thoughts naturally turn to taking bikes along. If three of the four are hams, then HTs belong in the picture too. This is an account of just such a vacation to Bavaria and Austria and some practical tips for future bicycle-mobile travelers to that part of the world.

Non-cyclists always question the wisdom of taking your own bikes, but few avid cyclists would think of spending three weeks on an unfamiliar mount. We were no different. We did however, break with our previous practice and this time all four of us brought mountain bikes. And, it worked out very well.

### Cobble-stones and Cow-paths

Touring cyclists in our part of the US — the high plains of Colorado — think in terms of miles traveled in a day. But experience has convinced me that European cycling is measured in villages, sites and experiences per day that tally up much faster than the miles. This calls for a bike that trades off efficiency for mobility. A bike that is undaunted by cobble-stones and cow-paths, coincidentally, is also a great mount for mobile radio operating.

So, equipped with well-tuned mountain bikes, HTs and reciprocal licenses we set off in early September on a grand tour of the back ways of Bavaria. The HTs began to earn their keep from day one. It had been a busy summer and despite our firm resolve to train together, we had only managed two rides as a team all summer. When combined with wide differences in our adaptation to jet-lag this had the effect of scattering our little party all over the vineyard country of Franken, in northern Bavaria.

But did we worry? Not a bit! We kept tabs by radio on a regular basis, reporting changes in direction taken by whomever was out front and stops taken by whomever wasn't. In the hilly countryside bordering Czechoslovakia, where the short steep climbs got lost on the map but not on the legs, we often "called an audible" and took separate routes with no worries — knowing, of course that we could keep in touch on 2 meters.

### Along the Danube

Cycling the *Donaus Radweg* (in English: Danube Bikeway) that lines both sides of the Danube River and its major tributaries is an exhilarating exercise in route-finding. While well documented by map and guidebook (in German) there is much that simply exceeds the limits of cartography to convey. The river banks have been the focus of man's activity for millennia and some of that investment has successfully defied displacement for the higher purpose and convenience of cycle-mounted travelers. As a result, the "path" winds through countless villages, backyards of restaurants and factories, and every type of agriculture imaginable. But thousands of cyclists pass through every week and you never feel like you're intruding. Still it is reassuring (and fun) to get on the HT and share your discoveries with your friends who may be miles away on the distant bank, or even floating along on one of the many ferries that ply the river.

Need I add that the opportunity to stop as often as I liked at the many beer and wine gardens convinced me to never again commit myself to traveling with someone who was not QRV in the saddle.

### Practical Tips

The ARRL has an efficient service to aid you in obtaining your reciprocal licenses. Write to them with a list of the countries you will be visiting and they will send you the necessary applications. These usually involve application to the local equivalent of the ARRL, not the equivalent of the FCC, and there is usually a small fee. In return you will get maps of repeater sites and band plans (European VHF and UHF FM is highly channelized).

The European 2m band is a subset of ours, but their 70cm band is all down at the 420-430 MHz end. Make certain that your HT is capable — or have it modified. Some repeaters require a 1750 or 1800 Hz tone-burst. This feature is often incompatible with the US CTCSS feature (which is not used there at all) and may not be available for your HT. Whistling a sliding note will often work. (Or as a musician would say, whistle a gliss that extends over an octave and you're bound to hit the right pitch.) Better practice it ahead of time. Your computer can generate a 1750 Hz tone for your practice reference.

Don't take rechargeable batteries. Your 110-v recharger isn't going to work, and you won't be staying in one place long enough to recharge it anyway. You are going to be using that HT every hour that you're not sleeping, even if it is only monitoring. Take one or two AA-cell packs and extra cells. The power density is much greater. And, no need to get too creative with hike-mounted antennas since you're likely to be on and off your bike a lot. But take something a bit more competent than the smallest rubber-duck.

Even though most of your transmissions will be on simplex frequencies where you may never be monitored, do remember to identify at regular intervals using standard international phonetics. English is just fine if you speak very little German. I had very little luck getting a QSO going with the locals in either English or German. VHF/UHF activity in Germany and Austria seems to be confined to communication between pre-acquainted parties and, unlike HF operation, is entirely in the local language. I never heard a CQ or the equivalent of "... listening" or "... monitoring" in my travels. Nor was I ever cautioned that any of my US operating practices were out of place. The repeaters were neither friendly nor hostile — just available.

So take your HT and your bike next time your travels take you to Europe. Be a good ambassador for US bicycle-mobilers. And, enjoy the freedom!

—Stan Hunting, KFDIA  
4655 Pleasant Ridge Rd.  
Boulder, CO 80301



# ANTENNAS

## Making a J-Pole Out of a Flag Pole

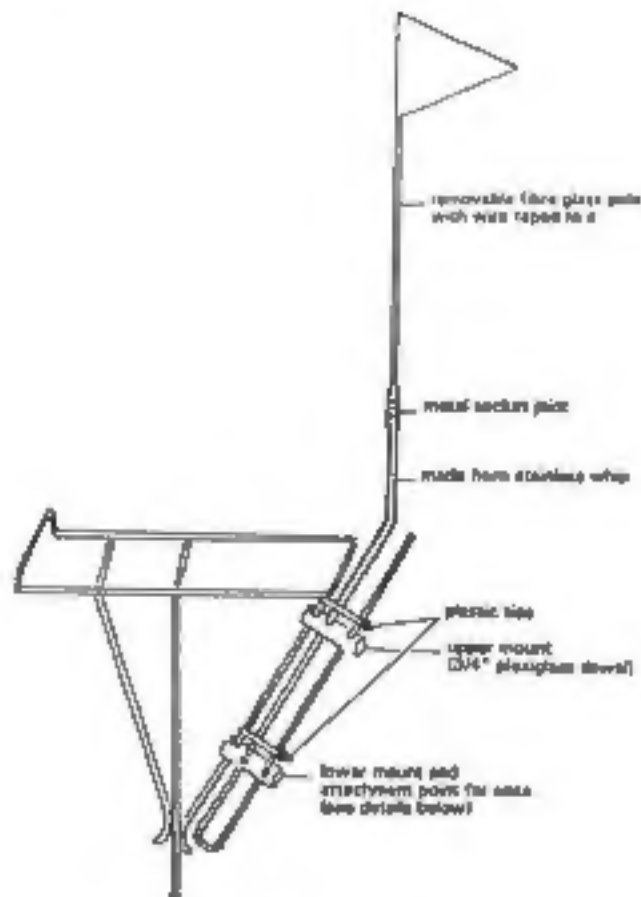
I thought perhaps other bicycle mobilers might like to hear of my rather unique J-pole for 2 metres (Canadian spelling) and its mounting arrangement. I chose the J-pole for the same reason others have: reasonable gain and lack of grounding requirements. I also like the J-pole because it is possible to tune out the effect of surrounding metal such as a bicycle frame. I bicycle to work — when there is no ice on the bicycle path! — and use a bicycle safety flag because part of my route is along well-traveled roads.

The flag I buy here in Toronto is comprised of two fibre glass halves that are joined by a metal pin-and-socket type of joint, with the female part being the upper half, the half that has the flag attached. I found a piece of stainless antenna whip which just fit into the female socket of the upper half of my flag pole.

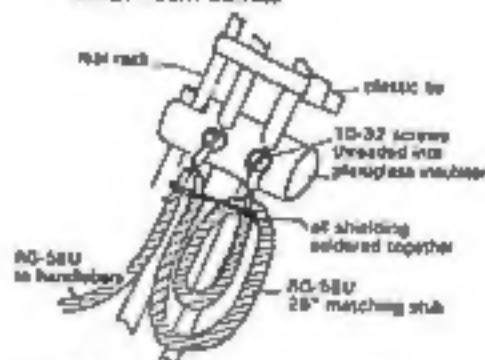
I bent the stainless into the J shape leaving just enough on the radiating part so that when I added the flag half it became the correct length. Since the flag pole was fibre glass I soldered a wire to the female socket and taped it to the side of the pole.

I like this mounting position (low on the rack) because it does not get in the way of panniers or any load on the top of the rack. And when I remove the flag pole, everything stays on the bike — coat, J section, etc. The flag pole is only 30" long and can be easily stored along the top tube of the bike frame. I am sure this is not the perfect solution but it does a good job for me and it's always ready to go.

—Bob Orrett, VE3HBN  
47 Dunsmuir Cr.  
Etobicoke, Ontario  
Canada M9R 3W7



LOWER MOUNT DETAIL



NOTE: space for bracket over by moving lower mount. Indica is 3\"/>

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### BICYCLE MOBILE HAMS OF AMERICA (BMHA)

Please complete and return to:  
BMHA, Box 4009, Boulder, CO 80306

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ License Class \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$10 per year \_\_\_\_\_ Family: \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Foreign: \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

(Pay by check in US dollars or international money order)  
(Make check payable to BMHA)

(check one) New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## BITS & PIECES

### Bike Bloopers

Bicycle moshing is a very enjoyable and incredibly addicting pastime. During the past couple of years I've had a lot of fun putting together and using my bicycle mobile station, but I've also made a few mistakes. Following is a brief treatise on things that can go wrong.

Make sure your rig is securely tied down. I used the belt clip on my TH-21A to hang it from a handlebar water bottle carrier. This worked quite well until I decided to get out of the saddle on an uphill sprint. My right knee launched the rig about six feet ahead of the bike into the street. Naturally there was a car coming, so I had to swerve around the radio and hope the car didn't hit it. I safely stopped, the car missed the radio (luckily), and surprisingly, there was only a minor chip out of the bottom of the case. Now I use a small bungee cord to hold it down.

Keep your antenna under control. I upgraded from a quarter wave whip to a 5/8 wave mounted on the back rack. This antenna really gets out, but it also swings wildly when I pedal. Once the bike is up to speed the antenna is pretty stable, but pumping up a hill causes the tip to "orbit" the base. The first time it hit the back of my helmet I about jumped out of my shorts! I realized that it was also swinging out far enough to hit an overtaking rider. The cure was easy: a length of quarter inch dowel was taped to the antenna. This not only calmed it down, but also made it more visible. Once other riders could clearly see the antenna they (correctly) assumed I was providing communications for the tour.

Keep your rig dry. Today's UHF/VHF gear is reasonably weather resistant, but any bike ride can suddenly put the rider out in some SERIOUS rain. I now keep a plastic bag in my jersey to cover the rig with in case of bad weather. Last time this happened, I had to stop and eat my sandwich so I could use the bag for the radio. The hailstorm that followed is another story...

—Len Koppl, KDORC  
1404 Dexter St.  
Broomfield, CO 80020

## BMHA NEWSLETTER


Bicycle Mobile Hams of America  
PO Box 4009  
Boulder, CO 80306

Address Correction Requested

First Class Mail

## QSL CORNER

In this space we feature QSL cards that have a bicycle-mobile motif. Send yours in. We'll run it.

<b>WA6QWH WA6RLZ</b>					
BOB MCCLARD      JEANNE MCCLARD					
1067 HELEN AVE. TOMB CITY, CALIFORNIA 95081 U.S.A. SUTTER COUNTY					
					
AMATEUR RADIO	CONFIRMING 3-WAY CONTACT				
DATE	TIME	FREQ	RST	MODE	QSL
KBBU Jun 25 '80	3:28 UTC	21	59	FM	THX PSE
MESSAGE: <i>Thanks for the nice QSL - for operating on Bicycle mobile the baseball dugout with a 3 element beam.</i>					

## CONTACT

This is a new department in the BMHA Newsletter, the object being to establish a clearing house where our readers can exchange information on a one-on-one basis. Send in your request — we'll run it.

My brother Bill rides quarter horses as well as bicycles and takes his handheld on both kinds of rides. We're wondering: is there a club for horseback hams?

—Denn Bernard, WBWMQ  
6555 S SR 73, Wilmington OH 45177

Has anybody figured out how to power a bike-mounted radio with a generator? I once saw a ham at a Field Day who powered his rig by a generator on his stationary bicycle. Please contact me if you've done this or have ideas.

—Ryan Crawford, K8WEO  
1001 Leeson Ave, Van Wert OH 45891